THEOSOPHY

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Pythagoras taught that the entire universe is one vast series of mathematically correct combinations. Plato shows the Deity geometrizing. The world is sustained by the same law of equilibrium and harmony upon which it was built. The centripetal force could not manifest itself without the centrifugal in the harmonious revolutions of the spheres; all forms are the product of this dual force in nature.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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In him who knows the difference between the nature of soul and mind, the false notion regarding the soul comes to an end.

—*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms*

THEOSOPHY

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A CENTURY OF PROGRESS?

WHILE the purposes behind the work of H. P. Blavatsky are doubtless best generalized by the Three Objects of the Theosophical Movement, she spoke of these purposes in various ways, each statement serving to emphasize a meaning needing to be grasped by the humanity of our time. For example, in her article, "Occult or Exact Science?" (published in the *Theosophist* for April and May, 1886), she said:

> About ten years ago, when *Isis Unveiled* was being written, the most important point the work aimed at was the demonstration of the following: (*a*) the reality of the *Occult* in nature; (*b*) the thorough knowledge of, and familiarity with, all such occult domains amongst "certain men," and their mastery therein; (*c*) hardly an art or science known in our age, that the *Vedas* have not mentioned; and (*d*) that hundreds of things, especially mysteries of nature,—*in abscondito* as the alchemists called it,—were known to the Aryas of the *premahabharata* period, which are unknown to us, the modern sages of the XIXth century.

If we read this article, "Occult or Exact Science?", reflectively we may conclude that H.P.B. had particular reasons for what she said. Quite evidently, her discussion of the remarkable faculties of certain sensitives—so misunderstood by the psychologists or "psychiatrists" of that time—was intended to confirm for the Theosophical reader the scheme of psychic evolution that would be provided in more detail in *The Secret Doctrine* (to which she refers). As she says:

> Any student of Occultism, the youngest of *chelas* who has just begun reading *esoterically* his Vedas, can suspect what the real phenomenon means; simply—*a cyclic return of human organisms to their primitive form* during the 3rd and even the 4th Root Races of what is known as the *Antediluvian periods*. . . . we are in the 5th race, and we have already passed the turning or *axial* point of our "sub-race cycle." Eventually, as the current phenomena and the increase of sensitive organisms in our age go to prove, this Humanity will be moving swiftly on the path of pure spirituality, and will reach the apex (of *our* Race) at the end of the 7th sub-race. . . . we have to infer the following:—that the latter half of our Round,—as shown to correspond with the first half of the 3rd,—must have already begun to be once more overshadowed by renascent "primordial" spirituality, which, at the end of the 4th Round, will have nearly eclipsed our actual mentality—in the sense of cold *human* reason.

The changes here described are a part of that planetary alteration noted on page 12 of *S.D.* I, and they relate as well to the paired encouragements and warnings given in the *Five Messages* concerning the accelerated psycho-manasic development now so much in evidence. Other attributes of the cycle now under way are described in H.P.B.'s article, "Premature and Phenomenal Growths" (THEOSOPHY 5: 325), while a broad statement about the racial transformation that "has already silently commenced" appears on pages 444-46 of *S.D.* II.

Interestingly, the phenomenal impact of such changes seems, in our period of history, to come before the occult explanation is made available. This was certainly the case in the nineteenth century, since, as H.P.B. explains in reply to a *Lucifer* reader (H.P.B. pamphlet, *Theosophy and the Western Mind*), the spiritualistic manifestations which began in 1848 were part of a "crisis" which made it "absolutely necessary to bring within the reach of our generation the Esoteric Doctrine of the eternal cycles." Again, as becomes clear in the article, "The Cycle Moveth" (H.P.B. pamphlet, *Cycles and Human Destiny*), she regarded Spiritualism as a cyclic pioneer of "the revival of prehistoric Theosophy," neither primordial nor pure, yet crudely anticipating the transcendental longings and intuitions that would become manifest during the closing years of the nineteenth century. Since the muddy torrent coming from the Kama-lokic phantom world had begun to flow into "ten thousand séance rooms," creating seriously misleading notions concerning what happens after death,

only the teaching of sevenfold man "could snatch mankind from drowning in a sea of ignorance."

The reason for this order of events—first the impact of experience, then the teaching of its explanation—is given in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 558) where it is said that Occult philosophy divulges its secrets "one by one, far and wide apart," and "only when forced to do so by the evolutionary tidal wave that carries on humanity slowly, silently, but steadily toward the dawn of the Sixth-Race mankind." Precocious knowledge would only be abused, to the great cost of the human race.

Another consideration requires attention. Persons of Western education have greatly shortened historical horizons, making it very difficult for them to adjust to the time-scales of the Theosophic conception of race evolution. When H.P.B. uses adjectives such as "swiftly" or "rapidly" in relation to the transformations of psycho-manasic development and the emergence of new racial types, these terms need to be amplified by recognition of the time-spans involved in such periods of development as "sub-races" and "Root-Races." Although these great cycles overlap, which has the effect of shortening them, they are still far longer than any of the epochs known to Western historians, making the transitions from one to another very gradual from our point of view, even though, to the occultist, they may be properly called "swift." An example of this outlook is found in the previously named article, "Premature and Phenomenal Growths," in which H.P.B. says:

> Now, what the Occultists say, is this: humanity is on the descending pathway of its cycle. The rear-guard of the 5th race is crossing slowly the apex of its evolution and will soon find itself having passed the turning point. And, as the descent is always more rapid than the ascent, men of the new coming (the 6th) race are beginning to drop in occasionally. Such children, regarded in our days by official science as exceptional monstrosities, are simply the pioneers of that race. . . . Thus we find . . . that the characteristics of the race that will follow ours are—a darker skin, shortened period of infancy and old age, or in other words a growth and development that in the present age (to the profane) appear quite miraculous.

Some explanation of practical instances of such changes is given by Mr. Judge in "On the Future: A Few Reflections" (Judge pamphlet series No. 2), while the conception of time applying to

the transformation is evident from a *Secret Doctrine* (II, 444-45) statement:

> Thus the Americans have become in only three centuries a "primary race," *pro tem.*, before becoming a race apart, and strongly separated from all other now existing races. They are, in short, the germs of the *Sixth* sub-race, and in some few hundred years more, will become most decidedly the pioneers of that race which must succeed to the present European or fifth sub-race, in all its new characteristics. After this, in about 25,000 years, they will launch into preparations for the seventh sub-race; until, in consequence of cataclysms—the first series of those which must one day destroy Europe, and still later the whole Aryan race (and thus affect both Americas), as also most of the lands directly connected with the confines of our continent and isles—the Sixth Root-Race will have appeared on the stage of our Round. When shall this be? Who knows save the great Masters of Wisdom, perchance, and they are as silent upon the subject as the snow-capped peaks that tower above them.

A further statement indicates the duration of the racial cycles here spoken of:

> Now our Fifth Root-Race has already been in existence—as a race *sui generis* and quite free from its parent stem—about 1,000,000 years; therefore it must be inferred that each of the four preceding Sub-Races has lived approximately 210,000 years; thus each Family-Race has an average existence of about 30,000 years. Thus the European "Family Race" has still a good many thousand years to run, although the nations or the innumerable spines upon it (see diagram p. 434), vary with each succeeding "season" of three or four thousand years. It is somewhat curious to mark the comparative approximation of duration between the lives of a "Family Race" and a "Sidereal year." (*S.D.* II, 435.)

It is against this larger historical background that the teaching regarding the psychical phenomena discussed in "Occult or Exact Science?" should be considered. H.P.B. explains the appearance of "sensitives" who see sounds and hear colors by pointing out that they are forerunners of future race development—to us "abnormal" cases of a capacity of perception that will not become the general rule until hundreds or even thousands of years hence. Yet the change has begun, and the evidences of its progress will no doubt become more frequent as time goes by. It seems clear that the reason for drawing attention to these persons who have supernormal powers of perception is that they illustrate to some

degree the occult teaching—that on higher planes the senses become interchangeable, and that, finally, when humanity regains a spiritual condition, there will be "but one SENSE, namely *spiritual perception.*" This is indeed one of "the psychical powers latent in man."

A further purpose of this article was to help Theosophical students to understand their own time, in terms of the psychological barriers to progress as well as those anticipatory phenomena which occult race history is used to explain. She says in effect that there is really no point in reproaching the scientists for not accepting the Theosophic view of psychical phenomena or the possession by the few of abnormal faculties:

> The men of science cannot help the world to understand the *rationale* of phenomena, which for a little while longer in this cycle it will be quite impossible for them to account for, even to themselves. They can neither understand nor explain it, any more than anyone else can, who has not studied occultism and the hidden laws that govern nature and rule mankind. The men of science are *helpless* in this case, and it is unjust to charge them with malice, or even with unwillingness—as has been often done. Their *rationality* (taken in this case in the sense of *intellectuality*, not of *reason*) can never permit them to turn their attention to occult study. Therefore it is useless to demand or expect from the learned men of our age that which they are absolutely incapable of doing for us, until the next cycle changes and transforms entirely their *inner* nature by "improving the texture" of their spiritual minds.

These observations concerning conventional scientists have a parallel in what H.P.B. says of orthodox scholars in the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine*. "No one," she wrote, "styling himself a 'scholar,' in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously." (I, xxxvii.) Here she is describing the inevitable limitation on the development of the mind of the race in general, or, as we might say today, of *institutional* science and scholarship, which is quite unable to exceed the rate of progress of which a race or nation in its collectivity is capable. The only exceptions to this rule, she points out (*S.D.* I, 326), are those who qualify for initiation.

There are nonetheless scientists not entirely in the grip of prevailing professional assumptions—men who, while not embracing occult doctrines, are able to move in the direction of philosophic truth. Dozens of such thinkers and investigators are

quoted in *The Secret Doctrine,* and in the article under discussion, the Russian scientist, A. Butlerof, is given as an example of one who, although blind to the truths of occultism, presses the thinking of his time toward the realities of which occult science treats. The scientists, in short, whatever the confinements imposed by the canons of scientific method, have their own way of contributing to the progress of the mind of the times, since they are led by the circumstances of their everyday practice to make discoveries that open the way to new ideas. H.P.B. speaks of this in *The Secret Doctrine,* remarking: "They will be driven out of their position not by spiritual, theosophical, or any other physical or even mental phenomena, but simply by the enormous *gaps* and *chasms* that open daily and will still be opening before them, as one discovery follows the other, until they are finally knocked off their feet by the ninth wave of simple common sense." (I, 620.) (It hardly need be said that this process or mode of progress did not stop in the nineteenth century, but continues in the present, as is often suggested in the pages of this Magazine.)

What, then, has happened during the hundred years since publication of *Isis Unveiled* (1877), a book which had for its purpose, as H.P.B. declared, to demonstrate the reality of the occult in nature, that there are those with knowledge of its laws, and that this knowledge was known to the ancients, including the early teachers of the Aryan or Fifth Race, which flourished long before any historical period known to modern man?

One could say, in reply to this question, that already, in the later years of the twentieth century, popular opinion has seized the initiative from both scientists and scholars, and is asserting the reality of "the occult" in a crude but emphatic fashion. The denials of skeptics count for little these days. Actually, a great deal of modern psychological research is now attempting to explore uncharted areas of the inner life, giving the impression that the scientists—if they can be called scientists—active in these fields are as much led by popular impulse as by indications revealed in their work.

At another and in some ways a higher level, the situation is much the same as it was in the nineteenth century, with the difference that while a hundred years ago the wonders of Spiritualism which attracted so much attention were almost entirely phenomenalistic in character, the present surge of interest in psychic

realities seems mainly drawn to what are called "occult" teachings and possibilities. Great confusion attends this inquiry, and the "crudity" to which H.P.B. referred is everywhere in evidence, while "pseudo-messiahs" are flourishing like the green bay tree. But at the same time the barriers of unbelief have nearly all come down, and beneath the froth of the psychic tide is serious wondering by many individuals who are looking for ancient truth in more or less the spirit that H.P.B. strove to arouse. The idea that there may be teachers who have this knowledge is also gaining currency, despite the extravagant claims of pretenders and the multiplication of "gurus" and poseurs to "spiritual knowledge." All this represents *belief,* not knowledge, yet the change in attitude on so large a scale cannot be without significance for the future. The observation of Alexander Wilder, quoted by H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy* (pp. 220-21), has direct application here. "Inside of human credulity," he said, "is a power almost infinite, a holy faith capable of apprehending the supremest truths of all existence." Study is the means of overcoming the weaknesses of credulity, opening the way to the intuitive power that wishful thinking misrepresents.

Meanwhile, exceptional men and women in the sciences are carrying forward much more disciplined activities, leading to intellectual awakening and change. Attention has already been given in these pages to the extraordinary philosophizing of physicists such as Erwin Schrödinger and Werner Heisenberg, and by the cosmologist, John Wheeler. Speaking of these tendencies, an eminent radio astronomer (Bernard Lovell) asked (in *Science* for March 19, 1976):

> Are physics and astronomy returning us to a belief in the partnership of the mind of man in the foundation of the universe? . . .
>
> Where lies the foundation of ethics? Is ethics created by man for the sake of survival, or is there a fundamental ethic in our existence in the universe?

Michael Polanyi's volume, *Personal Knowledge,* is based on the same serious questioning in relation to the foundation of scientific knowledge, and in a small book called *The Tacit Dimension* Polanyi deals with a sort of immediate or intuitive perception that, at least in principle, is suggestive of the idea of the "one sense" which lies behind the several avenues of sensory perception on which we rely for recognition of detail.

Popular writers are now pointing out the mistakes of Darwin in respect to the theory of Natural Selection, while a leading essayist, Theodore Roszak, takes note (in his book, *Unfinished Animal*) of the fact that Madame Blavatsky was the first to speak of a non-physical sort of evolution for man.

The closing words of "Occult or Exact Science?" place all these developments in a frame of occult historiography. H.P.B. takes into account the phenomena which excite human attention, and speaks finally of the law of cycles on which the true occultists rely:

> Therefore, to an Occultist there is nothing surprising in the idea that the physical world should be developing and acquiring new faculties,—a simple modification of matter, new as it now seems to science, as incomprehensible as were at first the powers of steam, sound, electricity. But what does seem surprising is the spiritual stagnation in the world of intellect, and of the highest exoteric knowledge.
>
> However, no one can impede or precipitate the progress of the smallest cycle. But perhaps old Tacitus was right: "Truth is established by investigation and delay; falsehood prospers by precipitancy." We live in an age of steam and mad activity, and truth can hardly expect recognition in this century. The Occultist waits and bides his time.

We learn by experience. Confidence gives courage—*is* courage. After a while we learn that the Law will act, regardless of any sentiment we may hold. And in this work things occur in peculiar ways—not to be accounted for by the usual process. At least, such has been my experience.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE WISDOM RELIGION

I

THEOSOPHY is defined under its Greek name, "Theosophia," in the *Theosophical Glossary*: "Wisdom Religion, or "Divine Wisdom.' The substratum and basis of all the world religions and philosophies, taught and practised by a few elect ever since man became a thinking being." This "Wisdom Religion" is in turn defined in the *Glossary* as:

> The one religion which underlies all the now-existing creeds. That "faith" which, being primordial, and revealed directly to human kind by their *progenitors* and informing EGOS (though the Church regards them as the "fallen angels"), required no "grace," nor *blind* faith to believe, for it was *knowledge*. It is on this Wisdom Religion that *Theosophy is based*.

In *The Key to Theosophy,* a further definition is given:

> The WISDOM-RELIGION was ever one, and being the last word of possible human knowledge, was, therefore, carefully preserved. It preceded by long ages the Alexandrian Theosophists, reached the modern, and will survive every other religion and philosophy. (Pp. 7-8.)

H.P.B. declares her faith in Masters and Their Message in the following terms: "What I do believe in is (1) the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living *divine* men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men; (2) that it has reached us *unaltered*; and (3) that the MASTERS are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching." (*Lucifer,* V, 157.)

In the "Summing Up" of *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 272-73) will be found a succinct statement of this Wisdom-Religion or Esoteric Philosophy, providing a unifying text for the passages here assembled:

> The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, . . . the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals . . . it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions . . . of higher and

> exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of humanity. That for long ages the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents had passed their lives in *learning, not teaching.* How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great Adepts; *i.e.,* men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic and spiritual organisations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions—so obtained as to stand as independent evidence —of other adepts, and by centuries of experiences. (I, 272-73.)

This keynote of Truth was struck by H.P.B. at the very commencement of her labors. In her first article on occult subjects, published in July, 1875, before the Theosophical Society had been founded, she wrote:

> All the mysterious doctrines had come down in an unbroken line of merely oral tradition as far back as man could trace himself on earth. They were scrupulously and jealously guarded by the Wise Men of Chaldea, India, Persia and Egypt, and passed from one Initiate to another, in the same purity of form as when handed down to the first man by the angels, students of God's great Theosophic Seminary.

Isis Unveiled, written, as its dedication shows, for the members of the newly formed Theosophical Society, appeared in 1877. H.P.B. said in the Preface: "Our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology."

Related statements appear throughout the two volumes of *Isis*:

> There never was, nor can there be more than one universal religion; for there can be but one truth concerning God. Like an immense chain whose upper end, the alpha, remains invisible emanating from a Deity—in *statu abscondito* with every primitive theology—it encircles our globe in every direction; it leaves not even the darkest corner unvisited, before the other end, the omega, turns back on its way to be again received where it first emanated. On this divine chain was strung the exoteric symbology of every people. Their variety of form is powerless to affect their substance, and under their diverse ideal types of the universe of matter, symbolizing its vivifying principles, the uncorrupted immaterial image of the spirit of being guiding them is the same.
>
> So far as human intellect can go in the ideal interpretation of

the spiritual universe, its laws and powers, the last word was pronounced ages since. (I, 560.)

This "secret doctrine" contains the alpha and the omega of universal science; therein lies the corner and the keystone of all the ancient and modern knowledge; and alone in this "unphilosophical" doctrine remains buried the *absolute* in the philosophy of the dark problems of life and death. (I, 511.)

. . . that from the first ages of man, the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth was in the safe keeping of the adepts of the sanctuary; that the difference in creeds and religious practice was only external; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe. It is for philology and psychology to find the end of the thread. That done, it will then be ascertained that, by relaxing one single loop of the old religious systems, the chain of mystery may be disentangled. . . .

Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts longtime lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof that

> If ancestry can be in aught believed
> Descending spirits have conversed with man,
> And told him secrets of the world unknown. (I, 37-38.)

And now we will try to give a clear insight into one of the chief objects of this work. What we desire to prove is, that underlying every ancient popular religion was the same ancient wisdom-doctrine, one and identical, professed and practiced by the initiates of every country, who alone were aware of its existence and importance. To ascertain its origin, and the precise age in which it was matured, is now beyond human possibility. A single glance, however, is enough to assure one that it could not have attained the marvelous perfection in

> which we find it pictured to us in the relics of the various esoteric systems, except after a succession of ages. A philosophy so profound, a moral code so ennobling, and practical results so conclusive and so uniformly demonstrable is not the growth of a generation, or even a single epoch. Fact must have been piled upon fact, deduction upon deduction, science have begotten science, and myriads of the brightest human intellects have reflected upon the laws of nature, before this ancient doctrine had taken concrete shape. The proofs of this identity of fundamental doctrine in the old religions are found in the prevalence of a system of initiation; in the secret sacerdotal castes who had the guardianship of mystical words of power, and a public display of a phenomenal control over natural forces, indicating association with preterhuman beings. Every approach to the Mysteries of all these nations was guarded with the same jealous care, and in all, the penalty of death was inflicted upon initiates of any degree who divulged the secrets entrusted to them. (II, 98-99.)

During the years 1881-1883, when "Fragments of Occult Truth" series was being published by H.P.B. in the *Theosophist*, she found occasion to defend and further define her position. Thus, in December 1881, H.P.B. comments on an article of Gerald Massey, a European mystic and spiritualist of great erudition, especially in the field of Egyptian hieroglyphic writings. Concerning his opinion that Egypt was the mother of all learning, H.P.B. says:

> The situation which the European mystic does not realise is this: The Eastern occult philosophy is the great block of solid truth from which the quaint, exoteric mysticism of the outer world has been casually thrown off from time to time, in veiled and symbolical shapes. These hints and suggestions of mystic philosophy may be likened to the grains of gold in rivers, which early explorers used to think betokened somewhere in the mountains from which the rivers sprang, vast beds of the precious metal. The occult philosophy with which some people in India are privileged to be in contact, may be likened to the parent deposits. Students will be altogether on a wrong track as long as they check the statements of Eastern philosophy by reference to the teachings and conceptions of any other systems. In saying this we are not imitating the various religionists who claim that salvation can only be had within the pale of their own small church. We are not saying that Eastern philosophy is right and everybody else is wrong, but that Eastern philosophy is the main stream of knowledge concerning things spiritual and eternal, which has come down in an unbroken flood through all the life of the world. That is

the demonstrable position which we, occultists of the Theosophical Society, have firmly taken up, and all archaeological and literary research in matters connected with the earliest religions and philosophies of historical ages helps to fortify it. The casual growths of mystic knowledge in this or that country and period, may or may not be *faithful* reflections of the actual, central doctrines; but, whenever they seem to bear some resemblance to these, it may be safely conjectured that at least they are reflections, which owe what merit they possess to the original light from which they derive their own. (III, 80-81.)

A little later, in February, 1882, she replied to W. Stainton Moses, editor of the Spiritualist journal, *Light,* in a similar vein:

It has been explained repeatedly that the continuity of occult knowledge amongst initiated adepts is the attribute about it which commends their explanations—absolutely to the acceptance of those who come to understand what initiation means and what kind of people adepts are. From Swedenborg onwards there have been many seers who profess to gather their knowledge of other worlds from actual observation, but such persons are isolated, and subject to the delusions of isolation. Any intelligent man will have an intuitive perception of this, expressing itself in a reluctance on his part to surrender himself entirely to the assurances of any such clairvoyants. But in the case of regularly-initiated seers it must be remembered that we are dealing with a long,—an extraordinarily long,—series of persons who, warned of the confusing circumstances into which they pass when their spiritual perceptions are trained to range beyond material limits, are so enabled to penetrate to the actual realities of things, and who constitute a vast organised body of seers, who check each other's conclusions, test each other's discoveries and formulate their visions into a science of spirit as precise and entirely trustworthy as, in their humble way, are the conclusions, as far as they go, of any branch of physical science. Such initiates are in the position, as regards spiritual knowledge that the regularly taught professor of a great university is in, as regards literary knowledge, and any one can appreciate the superior claims of instruction which might be received from him, as compared with the crude and imperfect instruction, which might be offered by the merely self-taught man. The initiate's speculations, in fact, are not spun at all; they are laid out before him by the accumulated wisdom of ages, and he has merely followed, verified and assimilated them.

But it may be argued, if our statement about the teachings of this absolutely trustworthy occult science claims to be something more than assertion and hypothesis, it is an assertion and, for the world at large, a hypothesis, that any such continuously-taught body of initiates is anywhere in existence. Now, in ref-

erence to this objection, there are two observations to be made, firstly, that there is a large mass of writings to be consulted on the subject, . . . and if you will only read the literature of Occultism it will be very strange if you still doubt that the continuity of initiation has been preserved. Secondly, we may point out that you may put the question about the existence of initiates altogether aside, and yet find in the philosophy of Occultism as expounded by those who do labour under the impression that they have received their teaching from competent instructors such inherent claims to intellectual adoption that it will be strange if you do not begin to respect it as a hypothesis. We do not say that the "fragments" given in our October number constitute a sufficiently complete scheme of things to command conviction [in] this way, on their own intrinsic merits, but we do say that even taken by themselves they do not offend intuitive criticism in the way that the alternative spiritual(istic) theory does. By degrees as we are enabled to bring out more ore from the mine which yielded the "fragments," it will be found that every fresh idea presented for consideration fits in with what has gone before, fortifies it, and is fortified by this in turn.

We bring for the consideration a new stock of ideas,—new, indeed, only as far as their application to modern controversies is concerned, old enough as measured by the ages that have passed over the earth since they were evolved. . . . We bring our friends and brethren in Spiritualism no mere feather-headed fancies, no light-spun speculation, when we offer them some toil-worn fragments of the mighty mountain of Occult knowledge, at the base of whose hardly accessible heights we have learned to estimate their significance and appreciate their worth. Is it asked why we do not spread out the whole scroll of this much vaunted philosophy for their inspection, at once, and so exhibit clearly its all-sufficing coherence? That question at least will hardly be asked by thoughtful men who realize what an all-sufficient philosophy of the Universe must be. As well might Columbus have been expected to bring back America in his ships to Spain. "Good friends, America, will not come," he might have said, "but it is there across the waters and, if you voyage as I did and the waves do not smother you, mayhap you will find it too." (III, 114-15.)

A clarifying contribution was made in the following month (March, 1882), in the second instalment of "Fragments of Occult Truth":

What constitutes real knowledge? The question lies at the very threshold of occult study . . . that query is, in actual practice, the first put before a regular student of occultism, who is taken in hand by the Professors of the Occult World. And the student is taught—or is led to see—that there are two kinds of

knowledge, the real and the unreal; the real concerned with eternal verities and primal causes, the unreal with illusory effects. So far the statement seems to deal with abstractions too vague to challenge denial. Each school of thinkers will admit so much, reserving to itself the assumption that the illusory effects are those considerations which have fascinated its rivals; the eternal verities its own conclusions. But we no sooner come to a clear understanding as to what mental presentiments must be classed as illusory effects, than we find the first proposition of Occult Philosophy at war with the whole current practice of the world at large, as regards all classes of scientific investigation. All physical science, and a good deal of what the Western world is pleased to call metaphysical speculation, rests on the crude and superficial belief that the only way in which ideas can get into the mind is through the channels of the senses. The physicist devotes all his efforts to the careful elimination from the mass of materials on which he builds up his conclusions, of everything except that which he conceives to be real fact—and it is exactly that which he conceives to be real fact—anything clearly appealing to the senses —which the profound philosophy of Eastern Occultism deliberately condemns at starting, as in its nature, illusory effects, transitory *secondary* consequences of the real underlying fact. And in acting thus, does Occult Philosophy make an arbitrary choice between rival methods, as a chemist might select one or other of two different methods of analysis? Not at all. Real philosophy cannot make any choice arbitrarily; there is but one eternal verity and, in pursuit of that, thought is forced to travel along one road. The knowledge which appeals to the senses cannot but deal with illusory effects, for all the forms of the world and its material combinations are but pictures in the great dissolving view of evolution. . . .

Of course, it must be remembered that the unreal knowledge, proceeding from the observation of illusory, because transitory and secondary effects, hangs together satisfactorily as regards the short chain it is able to construct. This it is which leads so many, in many respects powerful, minds, to be blindly contented with it. . . .

But can the eternal verity be reached? . . . .

Who possess the real knowledge as contradistinguished from the unreal?—the student of Occultism is asked, and he is taught to reply—that which we have shown to be the only possible reply—"the adepts alone possess the real knowledge, their minds alone *being en rapport* with the universal mind."

(III, 157-58.)

Coming now to *The Secret Doctrine,* published in 1888, H.P.B.

says in her Preface:

> These truths are in no sense put forward as a *revelation;* nor does the author claim the position of a revealer of mystic lore, now made public for the first time in the world's history. For what is contained in this work is to be found scattered throughout thousands of volumes embodying the scriptures of the great Asiatic and early European religions, hidden under glyph and symbol, and hitherto left unnoticed because of this veil. What is now attempted is to gather the oldest tenets together and to make of them one harmonious and unbroken whole. The sole advantage which the writer has over her predecessors, is that she need not resort to personal speculations and theories. For this work is a partial statement of what she herself has been taught by more advanced students, supplemented in a few details only, by the results of her own study and observation. . . .
>
> It is needless to explain that this book is not the Secret Doctrine in its entirety, but a select number of fragments of its fundamental tenets, . . .
>
> But it is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings, however fragmentary and incomplete, contained in these volumes, belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed, and become materialised. (I, vii-viii.)

In the Introductory she adds:

> The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world. Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records of its history, a complete chain of documents, showing its character and presence in every land, together with the teaching of all its great adepts, exist to this day in the secret crypts of libraries belonging to the Occult Fraternity. . . .
>
> Is it a new religion, we are asked? By no means; it is not a *religion,* nor is its philosophy *new;* for, as already stated, it is as old as thinking man. Its tenets are not now published for the first time, but have been cautiously given out to, and taught by, more than one European Initiate—especially by the late Ragon.
>
> More than one great scholar has stated that there never was a religious founder, whether Aryan, Semitic or Turanian, who had *invented* a new religion, or revealed a new truth. These

founders were all *transmitters,* not original teachers. They were the authors of new forms and interpretations, while the truths upon which the latter were based were as old as mankind. Selecting one or more of those grand verities—actualities visible only to the eye of the real Sage and Seer—out of the many orally revealed to man in the beginning, preserved and perpetuated in the *adyta* of the temples through initiation, during the MYSTERIES and by personal transmission—they revealed these truths to the masses. Thus every nation received in its turn some of the said truths, under the veil of its own local and special symbolism; which, as time went on, developed into a more or less philosophical cultus, a Pantheon in mythical disguise. Therefore is Confucius, a very ancient legislator in historical chronology, though a very modern Sage in the World's History, shown by Dr. Legge—who calls him "emphatically a *transmitter,* not a maker"—as saying: "I only hand on: I cannot create new things. I believe in the ancients and therefore I love them." (Quoted in "Science of Religions" by Max Müller.)

The writer loves them too, and therefore believes in the ancients, and the modern heirs to their Wisdom. And believing in both, she now transmits that which she has received and learnt herself to all those who will accept it. (I, xxxiv-xxxvii.)

Much is reiterated in the closing pages of the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*:

The Secret Doctrine is the common property of the countless millions of men born under various climates, in times with which History refuses to deal, and to which esoteric teachings assign dates incompatible with the theories of Geology and Anthropology. The birth and evolution of the Sacred Science of the Past are lost in the very night of Time; and that, even, which is historic—*i.e.,* that which is found scattered hither and thither throughout ancient classical literature—is, in almost every case, attributed by modern criticism to lack of observation in the ancient writers, or to superstition born out of the ignorance of antiquity. It is therefore, impossible to treat this subject as one would the ordinary evolution of an art or science in some well-known historical nation. It is only by bringing before the reader an abundance of proofs all tending to show that in every age, under every condition of civilization and knowledge, the educated classes of every nation made themselves the more or less faithful echoes of one identical system and its fundamental traditions—that he can be made to see that so many streams of the same water must have had a common source from which they started. What was this source? If coming events are made to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind

them. It is, then, by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them. There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith. (II, 794.)

Reviewing ancient evolutionary theories in the section entitled "Primordial Substance and Divine Thought," H.P.B. points out:

Nevertheless, occult Science—having survived even the great Flood that submerged the antediluvian giants and with them their very memory, save in the Secret Doctrine, the Bible and other Scriptures—still holds the Key to all the world problems.

Let us apply that Key to the rare fragments of long-forgotten cosmogonies and try by their scattered parts to re-establish the once Universal Cosmogony of the Secret Doctrine. The Key fits them all. No one can study ancient philosophies seriously without perceiving that the striking similitude of conception between all—in their exoteric form very often, in their hidden spirit invariably—is the result of no mere coincidence but of a concurrent design: and that there was, during the youth of mankind, one language, one knowledge, one universal religion, when there were no churches, no creeds or sects, but when every man was a priest unto himself. And, if it is shown that already in those ages which are shut out from our sight by the exuberant growth of tradition, human religious thought developed in uniform sympathy in every portion of the globe; then, it becomes evident that, born under whatever latitude, in the cold North or the burning South, in the East or West, that thought was inspired by the same revelations, and man was nurtured under the protecting shadow of the same TREE OF KNOWLEDGE. (I, 341.)

Asked by the "Enquirer" of *The Key to Theosophy,* "But how did this system come to be put forward just now?", H.P.B. replied:

Just because the time was found to be ripe, which fact is shown by the determined effort of so many earnest students to reach *the truth,* at whatever cost and wherever it may be concealed. Seeing this, its custodians permitted that some portions at least of that truth should be proclaimed. Had the formation of the Theosophical Society been postponed a few years longer, one half of the civilized nations would have become by this time rank materialists, and the other half anthropomorphists and phenomenalists.

And in the Introductory of *The Secret Doctrine* she said:

Toward the end of the first quarter of this century, a distinct class of literature appeared in the world, which became with every year more defined in its tendency. Being based, *soi-disant*, on the scholarly researches of Sanskritists and Orientalists in general, it was held scientific. Hindu, Egyptian, and other ancient religions, myths, and emblems were made to yield anything the symbologist wanted them to yield, thus often giving out the rude *outward* form in place of the *inner* meaning. . . .

This is the true reason, perhaps, why the outline of a few fundamental truths from the Secret Doctrine of the Archaic ages is now permitted to see the light, after long millenniums of the most profound silence and secrecy. (I, xxi-xxii.)

Later she added:

In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called *Gupta-Vidya*; and that, like the once-mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found. (I, xxxviii.)

(*To be continued*)

For man is made up of millions of lives, and from these, unable of themselves to act rationally or independently, he gains ideas, and as master of all puts those ideas, together with others from higher planes into thought, word and act.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

letters · questions · comment

Among the "communities" established to provide a more ideal way of life, those organized around a religious conception have lasted the longest. Since the histories of these communities show that the religion involved has almost always been of a sectarian and even bizarre character, why this notable success? Why have well-considered social and economic goals not been adequate to hold together such community enterprises?

The longevity of religiously based communal societies suggests that they provide goals and means which enable the members to subordinate personal self-interest to a larger, commonly accepted purpose or goal. Experience of a life of this sort may lead to the realization that there are qualities in human beings which can overcome petty differences—the qualities of humility, self-denial, and the desire for self-improvement, among others. While the personal nature and its characteristic interests open the way to a wide variety of experience, in which, eventually, the underlying law of unity may be discerned, yet the personal nature alone lacks the resources for providing insight into that unity.

In a letter to a Theosophical cooperative household in England, Mr. Judge calls attention to this limitation (*Letters That Have Helped Me,* p. 69):

> Many times have cooperative households been tried and failed. One was tried here and is famous. It was called the Brook Farm, but it had no such high aim and philosophy behind it as you have, and thus the personal frictions, developed at any place of close intimacy, broke it up. Yours may alter in number and in personnel, but can never be broken up if the aim is high and the self-judgment is strict and not self-righteous.

The emphasis, in Mr. Judge's letter, is not on "survival" of the community, through the years, but on the opportunities for a kind of growth which can only be called growth of soul:

> In a place like yours, where so many of all sorts of nature are together, there is unique opportunity for gain and good in the chance it gives one for self-discipline. There friction of personality is inevitable, and if each one learns the great "give

> and take," and looks not for the faults of others but for the faults he sees in himself, because of the friction, then great progress can be made. The Masters have said that the great step is to learn how to get out of the rut each one has by nature and training, and to fill up the old grooves. This has been misconstrued by some who have applied it only to the outer habits of life, and forgotten that its real application is to the mental grooves, and the astral ones, also.

A price must be paid, one could say, for achieving a kind of social permanence through agreeing on changes to be accomplished in the outer habits of life—life according to an ideal which defines moral behavior in terms which exact conformity and reduces various practical uncertainties to a minimum. As a result there is loss of initiative and of the opportunity for manasic development. One could say, on the other hand, that without the constraints of a sectarian code, or any coercive devices, the coherence of a community lacking in strong philosophy become difficult to maintain, as the high mortality of present-day "communes" would indicate.

But if the often misleading criterion of longevity be eliminated, factors of greater importance may be examined. Often communities seek to avoid prevailing practices in the larger society which offend the ethical sense. Here the replacement of disapproved ways with positive activities is more effective than prohibitions. In *All Things Common* (Harper, 1950), Claire Hutchet Bishop gives insight into the atmosphere of freedom, moral vitality, and extraordinary success (for a time) of the French Communities of Work which arose in France after World War II. The members of the pioneer group of this movement, worker-owners of a watchcase factory, composed for themselves a guiding rule, called the Common Ethical Minimum, of which they said:

> We will put down in writing what our ideal is for living and acting. We will strive to conform our lives to it. . . . The failure of any one of us in observing the Rule will contribute to the education of all.

The underlying spirit is shown by the reflections of two members on the Rule:

> We start from the idea that human laws cannot really compel men unless resting on an ethic accepted by those very men.
>
> It is always possible to regret that all men have not attained the same high level of moral perfection. It is useless to fool

oneself by making laws based on an ethic no one would recognize.

So, facing the truth, we do not attempt to correct men by making more and more exacting laws, but by educating them and bringing them to become conscious of their failures. . . .

The necessities of Community life will show gradually, as progress goes on, in what sense the common ethical minimum has to be revised and replaced by a more exacting one.

The evolution of the spirit and understanding of community makes an area of greatly rewarding study for those seeking to understand both the mysteries and possibilities covered by the term "human nature."

INTUITION IN PRACTICE

Student.—Tell me some ways by which intuition is to be developed.

Sage.—First of all by giving it exercise, and second by not using it for purely personal ends. Exercise means that it must be followed through mistakes and bruises until from sincere attempts at use it comes to its own strength. This does not mean that we can do wrong and leave the results, but that after establishing conscience on a right basis by following the golden rule, we give play to the intuition and add to its strength. Inevitably in this at first we will make errors, but soon if we are sincere it will grow brighter and make no mistake. We should add the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not. They say the Self is the only reality. The brain must be given larger views of life, as by the study of the doctrine of reincarnation, since that gives a limitless field to the possibilities in store. We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

on the lookout

Maturing Karma

Writing in 1888, H. P. Blavatsky explained the timing of the advent of the Theosophical Movement as a response to a crisis in human thought and affairs, produced by the brutal materialism which had overtaken the Western world as a reaction against ages of religious bigotry and repression. The crisis became urgent when the phenomena of Spiritualism "created most misleading notions of man's *post-mortem* state." The last quarter of the nineteenth century was a time of decision, when psychic manifestations were challenging the mechanistic assumptions of science, while the feeble voice of inherited religion could say nothing persuasive. Similar lines of confrontation are becoming apparent today. On the surface the issues may appear different, but the underlying questions of the present have a close resemblance to those of a century ago. It may be said that the materialism which H.P.B. attacked in the nineteenth century is now showing its colors through concrete effects on both the planet and society. There is a sense in which the philosophical questions of the past have become practical issues.

Motives Behind Western Civilization

In the *Michigan Quarterly Review* for the Spring of 1977, Henry Skolimowski, a teacher of philosophy, examines the motives and the methods pervading the Western idea of progress, pointing out that the zest for technology is far more than "a stupid infatuation with superficial gadgets." For centuries this reliance on manipulation and control has been part of the actual being of man. Material achievement, Prof. Skolimowski says, was "conceived as an instrument of liberation, as the vehicle of freedom, as a Noah's Ark: of hope, of prosperity, of progress." These are some of the reasons why emancipation from the grip of materialistic thinking is so difficult for many. This writer suggests the far-reaching character of the change in attitude required:

> The present order of the Western man, out of which have grown our ways of life, is based to a large degree on quantitative, instrumental values. It is in terms of these values that most, if not all, social and political assessments are made. . . . As long as the quantitative instrumental basis remains unchanged and channels its imperative via descriptive science, via industrial profit-efficiency-oriented technology, via economics geared to free enterprise, the order of things will remain the same, and we shall have to endure the same quantity-ridden way of life which is imposed on us.

The Attitudes Needed

Declaring for a use of technology which is guided by human instead of technological imperatives, Prof. Skolimowski proposes a philosophy which respects the delicate balances of nature, seeks collaboration with instead of exploitation of the scheme of life and environment, conceives progress in terms of deepening awareness, and, finally, "insists that we learn a fundamental lesson from societies and civilizations which we have contemptuously treated in the past, but which have preserved sanity, unity and coherence by consciously integrating themselves into schemes of things larger than the pursuit of material progress." While, in the present, these are not particularly new ideas, their concise expression has the virtue of summing up the realizations that are becoming generally apparent in this concluding portion of the twentieth century.

"We See it All Coming"

Confirmation of this change in thinking at the practical level comes in the form of an interview with George McRobie in the *Futurist* for last April. Mr. McRobie was a co-founder with E.F. Schumacher of the Intermediate Technology Development Group of London, which works to put into practice the standards and goals so well stated by Prof. Skolimowski. (Mr. Schumacher has himself declared these underlying goals on many occasions.) Replying to a comment by the *Futurist* writer to the effect that while the educated and intelligent sector of the population may have already recognized the urgent necessity of change, the general public has not reached this point, Mr. McRobie agreed, remarking that in his lecture tours he meets "only people who have begun to think this way." However, he then added:

> But six months ago we organized a meeting of the managing

directors and chairmen of 20 of the biggest industries in Britain. Schumacher talked and then I spoke, and not a single man at the table disagreed with what we said. They said, "Yes, we see it all coming."

Psycho-Social Effects

Practical pressures are being added to philosophical recognition. Describing some of these influences, Mr. McRobie said:

> The great theory of automation was that in the end everyone would be happy as larks, because no one would be making anything; everyone would be pushing buttons. I've never yet seen a man who was happy as a lark pushing buttons. People ask, "What is industry doing to us?" What it's doing is creating moronic people. And then we turn on them and say, "We must police you. You are constantly going on strike. So we must pass an anti-strike law." And that leads to violence. All I can see coming out of high technology at the moment is some form of totalitarianism.

No "Great Success"!

Other pressures are growing out of the threatened exhaustion of natural resources and the ecological disasters reported by scientific investigators—not to mention the vulnerability of great urban centers to power failures, by reason of the complexity and massive size of utility services. Mr. McRobie emphasizes the contradiction between past expectations of industrial development and the actual results:

> We cannot sustain the great abuse of resources we've had, even if the developing countries allow us to do so, which they won't. We are stripping the world of its raw materials and resources and leaving the developing nations out in the cold. Heaven help countries like Britain and Japan! We hold Japan up as the great success story of industrialization. I believe that anyone who visits Japan doesn't come back with the feeling that it's a great success. Any city where people have to walk around wearing gas masks because of the pollution is not a great success! And the violence that Japan is now inflicting on the face of the earth, rapaciously tearing into resources as fast as it can! The U.S. is guilty of the same thing, though not in as frantic a way, and it's not for want of trying that Britain, France, and Germany aren't doing the same.

Nascent Moral Ideas

On the other side of the ledger, a writer in the *Sierra Club Bul-*

letin for the Summer of 1977 points out that the new ecological science, now so influential, unlike most of the other branches of science, soon develops ethical imperatives which cannot be ignored. Another writer in the *Bulletin* notes the gradual emergence of ethical and moral conceptions as basic in human decision, naming for evidence Christopher Stone's book, *Should Trees Have Standing?,* Singer's *Animal Liberation,* and Needleman's *A Sense of the Cosmos.* Recalling Aldo Leopold's chapter on a "Land Ethic," in *A Sand County Almanac,* this contributor finds much evidence that this conception of human responsibility is taking hold. He quotes from Paul Shepard's *The Subversive Science* (Ecology):

> If nature is not a prison and earth a shoddy way-station, we must find the faith and force to affirm its metabolism as our own—or rather our own as part of it. To do so means nothing less than a shift in our whole frame of reference and our attitude toward life itself, a wider perception of the landscape as a creative, harmonious being without losing our sense of a great human destiny and without intellectual surrender; we must affirm that the world is a being, a part of our body.

Natural and Practical Ethics

The *Sierra Club Bulletin* writer comments:

> Rather than being a dream, Leopold's land ethic now seems more realistic and practical than the nightmare of a technological society where problems are not seen in philosophical or even political terms, but only as problems to be "solved" by engineers and other experts.
>
> On the practical level, resistance to business-as-usual science and engineering is seen in attempts to articulate "appropriate technology" as urged by E. F. Schumacher in his influential book *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.*

"Turbulent Situation"

In an article in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* for Jan. 20, 1977, Theodore Roszak surveys the present as a time of radical change in point of view. He begins by noting the high expectations of all the good that would flow from the scientific Enlightenment which began, more or less, with Galileo. The confident hope, in Baconian terms, was that new discoveries would "some day comprehend all knowledge (ethics and politics included); and would banish death, drudgery and wickedness from the world." But the

outcome of this vast drama of Western history has been quite different, and the shake-up in assumptions and prevailing ideas which came at the end of the seventeenth century—the age of Isaac Newton—is now being repeated at another level. Mr. Roszak writes:

> We are in much the same turbulent situation these days with respect to the liveliest cultural adventure of our time: the exploration of human potentialities. Everybody knows the pursuit has something to do with the further, still shadowy, reaches of human nature, with opening up undeveloped powers of health, understanding, enlightenment. But what to call it, and where to set its limits? Is it science . . . mysticism . . . therapy? Does it endorse or replace religion? What is its ethical and social impact?
>
> The field seethes with extravagant promises of "expanded consciousness" and "alternative realities." Images of evolutionary "breakthrough" are everywhere in vogue; half-formed ideas congregate around certain key words: "energy," "vibrations," "growth." We are dealing with a something that seems to aspire to science, laps over into spirituality, feels like psychiatry, frequently trickles away into fun and games . . . and nobody has yet found a name for it all.

A Century Ago

In the nineteenth century it was Spiritualism which had this unsettling role. Today the awakening and disturbance is identified as the "Human Potential" movement, with all the uncertainty, mixed moral qualities and possibilities this expression implies. Its characterization by Mr. Roszak recalls what H.P.B. said of the Spiritualist movement in her time. While it was able to interrupt the unchallenged rule of scientific materialism, pointing to hidden powers or faculties in human beings, the waters of this great "Spiritual" flood, as H.P.B. remarked in "The Cycle Moveth," were "neither primordial nor pure." Yet the response to its implications had great historical significance, of which H.P.B. said:

> It was an undeniable and not to be misunderstood answer of the inner nature of man to the then revelling, gloating Materialism of the age, as an escape from which there was but another form of evil—adherence to the dogmatic, ecclesiastical conventionalism of State religions. It was a loud, passionate protest against both, a drifting towards a middle way between the two extremes. . . . such as they were, these abnormal mani-

festations, being in their bulk genuine and spontaneous, carried away and won all those who had in their souls the sacred spark of intuition. . . . But whether they placed belief in and followed "Spiritualism" or not, many were those on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas. The enormous and ever-growing number of mystics at the present time [1888] show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle.

Encouragement and Warning

There were thus two sides to the Spiritualist irruption, in terms of its effects. And so it is, in the present, with respect to the "human potential" movement. A passage in H.P.B.'s fourth message to the American Theosophists clearly anticipates this duality in the present:

Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outruns the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of Those whose good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves.

Recurring Dangers

The tendencies now so common in the present were evident on a smaller scale in the nineteenth century, bringing this comment from H.P.B. in her second message to the American students:

Many are those who joined our Society for no other purpose than curiosity. Psychological phenomena were what they sought, and they were unwilling to yield one iota of their own pleasures and habits to obtain them. These very quickly went away empty-handed. The Theosophical Society has never been and never will be a school of promiscuous Theurgic rites. But there are dozens of small occult Societies which talk very glibly of Magic, Occultism, Rosicrucianism, Adepts, etc. These profess much, even to giving the key to the Universe, but end by leading men to a blank wall instead of the "Door of the Mysteries." These are some of our most insidious foes. Under cover of the

philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion they manage to get up a mystical jargon which for the time is effective and enables them, by the aid of a very small amount of clairvoyance, to fleece the mystically inclined but ignorant aspirants to the occult, and lead them like sheep in almost any direction.

Qualities of Awakening

In his recent article, Mr. Roszak endeavors to give an account of the constructive and authentically searching side of the "New Age," noting the quality of such books as Huston Smith's *Forgotten Truths,* and *On the Way to Self-Knowledge* edited by Jacob Needleman and Dennis Lewis:

> Taken as a group, these works typify the ambitious range and the intellectual solidity of the current efforts by increasing numbers of scholars, philosophers, scientists and therapists to revise the dominant Reality Principle of the modern world. It is a great cultural adventure whose highest purpose is to make whole the personality that Western industrialism has so brutally fragmented: to preserve the best of our science and ethical resolution, to awaken the organic harmonies, to reclaim as living experience the spiritual traditions that are the well-springs of culture.

Discard of Old Tendencies

Mr. Roszak feels that one effect of this broad movement has been to bring a measure of freedom from the self-condemnation and guilt-feelings characteristic of both puritan religion and psychoanalytical science, opening the way to a truer understanding of the self. He says:

> Most of the psychological literature of our culture (with the exception of some notably unashamed Romantic spirits) dotes on guilt, personal horror and self-loathing. What is Freud's psychoanalysis but—inevitably—an agonizing search for guilty secrets: incest, sexual perversion, patricidal fantasies, death wishes, the flight from mortality? . . . Moreover, I suspect that it is out of this restless sense of guilty fear that much of the work discipline and entrepreneurial energy of our society derives: these are the displacement of a tormenting discontent into the surrounding world. We turn out and away from ourselves because inside is terror and the abyss. Our escape is into history; our penance is "progress."

Idea of Self

Whatever their limitations and defects, the focus of the new religions is on better things. "Instead, they look beyond our

fallenness toward higher potentialities and the prospects of growth, health, fulfillment." Moreover, "it is by now notorious that the imported Oriental disciplines teach our inherent divinity." Guilt feelings are at least reduced to something like normal size by these influences. And Mr. Roszak adds: "But do we not sense within us the possibility of a finer, more positive and mature ethical conduct—a sense of authentic conscience that responds naturally to good and needs no shame to make its power felt?" "I suspect," he concludes, "that a society of innocence (if there should ever be one) would lack all the psychic compulsions on which industrial discipline is based."

A New Metaphysics Wanted

These, we may think, are some of the factors of change which, given time and guidance, will contribute to the great change in outlook called for by Henry Skolimowski. As he puts it:

> We need to develop alternative world-views, alternative metaphysics as the basis for reflection on technology vis-à-vis society and civilization. Every metaphysics provides different ways of comprehending reality. Conceptual analyses of science and technology within an alternative world-view may, almost certainly will result in a different appraisal of science and technology for humanity at large. In short, the way toward understanding the metaphysical roots of technology, the way toward creating an alternative humanistic technology, must lead through the creation of an alternative world-view (alternative metaphysics) which alone will enable us to grasp sharply and clearly ramifications and consequences of present technology for a future human society. Constructing alternative metaphysics is the most exciting intellectual task of our times with profound and far-reaching practical consequences.

The student of Theosophy will have little difficulty in filling in the areas left blank in Prof. Skolimowski's prescription.

Reincarnation Anthology—New Edition

William Q. Judge begins the tenth chapter of *The Ocean of Theosophy,* in which he assembles arguments in support of the idea of reincarnation, by saying: "Unless we deny the immortality of man and the existence of soul, there are no sound arguments against the doctrine of pre-existence and re-birth." Evidence that a similar conclusion has been reached by the greatest minds throughout history is presented in the just-published *Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery* (Julian Press/Crown Publishers,

$10.00) edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. This is not a new book, but a much supplemented revision of two previous editions, *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology* and *Reincarnation in World Thought*. As the tide of interest in metaphysical and Eastern teachings grows, a spontaneous turning to reincarnation has seemed to result, providing a continuing harvest of human expression on this great subject. It is natural, therefore, for there to be successive editions of this increasingly useful anthology, quite evidently compiled with a Theosophic inspiration. Both Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Judge appear frequently, although never obtrusively. Their role as a major source of clarity and explanation concerning the reality and processes of rebirth makes it natural for what they say to amount to a keynote.

Combined Appeals

The Preface to this edition speaks of the present-day openness to philosophical ideas and teachings, finding in the words of a Spanish writer, Luis Racionero, concise embodiment of the new spirit in the world of thought. It is time, he says, to abandon "a cold museum science that analyzes, reasons, kills and dissects." To take its place we must find a vision which transforms itself into action, "materializing visionary states of mind, forging the still uncreated conscience of the race." The age of skepticism and bleak existential denials is over. "Out of the end of a time we must make a new path to the hidden meanings of things. . . . Once again there must be Apocalypsis and Palingenesis—death and rebirth." This is an attitude and mood which seems to pervade the volume, giving both familiar and new material fresh currency. The reader who examines its contents attentively will be likely to say to himself that the book is indeed a literary facsimile of living processes, a natural history of the powers, processes, and continuity of mind.

W. Macneile Dixon, still the most quoted writer on reincarnation, makes this appeal:

Great Minds Agree

> Rational? What could be less rational than that the pen and paper should be more enduring than the saint, that we should have Shakespeare's handwriting but not himself? Raphael's pictures but not the mind that conceived them? . . .
>
> "Not to be twice-born, but once-born, is wonderful."

A leading West Coast reviewer has said: "The impressive quality of the volume is that it shows the continuing concern with

the reincarnation problem right down to the rational and scientific present," while the noted Indian scholar, the late S. Radhakrishman, remarked of an earlier version that it will "open the eyes of many people who dismissed the rebirth theory as something oriental." Actually, the universal character of the acceptance and affirmation of reincarnation is perhaps the book's most persuasive feature. The power of consensus among great minds, wherever they are found, is not a matter of numbers but of strength, beauty, clarity, and impassioned certainty, all striking the same note. The agreement is dramatic: "How could I not have lived before?" "How could I not live again?", so many writers say. Through page after page, it is the *quality* of the testimony which becomes overwhelming. A particularly delighting feature added in this latest edition comes at the end. Titled "A Final Gathering of East and West," it places within a few pages rare jewels of expression from widely diverse sources, all declaring from the depths of heart and the heights of mind that, if a man dies, he will indeed live again.

A Matter of "Concentration"

One does not ordinarily expect to find occult principles illustrated on the sports page, yet a recent report on the achievements of Dwight Stones, an Olympic high jumper who holds both the indoor and outdoor records (*Christian Science Monitor* for June 22), suggests their use by this extraordinary athlete. No one, the sports writer says, "has ever transformed his forward speed into upward motion better than Dwight." The running approach is 75 per cent of the jump, according to the record-holder. But most important of all is the way he thinks about what he is doing. The newspaper article includes this statement by Dwight Stones, taken from *Sports Illustrated*:

> "I see a translucent image of myself coming out of myself. I watch to see if my body will make it. Many times it doesn't. I have to concentrate harder. Those who know me well can often tell by my fifth step [he takes ten] whether or not I will make it. The last time I set the record, I could see two steps before I jumped that I had it made."

This, quite evidently, is a use of the imagination in Mr. Judge's sense of a "king faculty," since "the Will cannot do its work if the imagination be at all weak or untrained."

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